

Good day, my name is Tambra Craven, a long time resident of Cooper Township, Kalamazoo County. I'm here today and give my full support to House Bill 5903 and ~~the~~^{an} amendment for age requirements.

Everyday, I read the paper to see what's new in education. I read the paper in hopes in finding an answer on how to finance my son going to college this coming year or next year. On March 22, 2006, in the Kalamazoo Gazette on page A1 I found my answer. House Bill 5903 by House Representative Jack Hoogendyk, it allows funds for juniors and seniors in high school to attend community colleges. What got me was by the time they're in 11th and 12th grade most children were already bored with their education by 7th grade. 6th, 7th, and 8th grade in most districts are a repeat of the previous K-5th because of the No Child Left Behind Act. My son is 12 years old in the seventh grade. He has taken the SAT's and regularly scores in the top 95% of students in his grade not age group. House bill 5903 is a good bill. But it can be a great bill by adding ~~the~~^{an} amendment_____ that will allow all students who are ages 12 thru 15 to access these funds earlier for community college education.

The students that we are talking about (like my son) already meet requirements to attend college if they had access to two things: means of payment and parent consent. Advance-placement students are in a gray area. When parents like myself ask our districts to challenge our children by either advancing them or finding advance school for them the districts often respond by saying that children need to be socially and emotionally mature for advancement. As a parent of a gift & talented student I can tell you personally I wouldn't be here today supporting this bill if I didn't feel that my son could compete on a college academic playing field.

No parent would go to a school and ask that their child be advanced without sound information to back them up. Most districts (like mine) have limited resources for funding and if they advance this kids what do they do with them if they advance past their own teachers. As a parent, the answer is simple. Educators are always saying parents need to be involved with their children and the education. Yet, when parents like me go to our educators getting involved we either get the run around or ignored for making waivers in the school system. While our advance-placement students sit in a classroom bored out of their mind 6 out of 8 hours a day. Advance-placement students begin to throw tests and don't complete assignments in the name of fitting in. By 7th grade, we begin to lose their intellectual minds. Advance-placement students begin to just accept their surroundings instead of accepting a new challenge. The students learn to control what is

going on around them. Yet, when they are presented with an opportunity that offers enrichment they fear failure instead of embracing the challenge. Advance-placement students need to have constant opportunities for enrichment and advancement.

Parents need to know that politicians like you realize that parents know what's best for all our children. I'm a divorced mom who is self-employed. I'm an Accredited Child Care provider. I have worked with children everyday for the last thirteen years. My budget is very tight, but that has not stopped me from thinking and doing something about sending my son to the community college this fall to supplement his education. I can't believe while I'm paying taxes to our local school district that my son is not getting the education he deserves and needs. My son and all students deserve quality education. If our local districts can't meet the needs then parents like ^{MUSE RF} I should have options. House Bill 5903 is one option.

Attending community colleges is another way to supplement their education that they desperately deserve and need. House Bill 5903 is not a solution, but it's the beginning. Right now, this Bill is my answer both for my son's education and my financial budget. Please take a moment before you vote and realize that no adult should accept that a child should be left behind because they are too smart for their school district and too poor to seek other schooling.

Thank you for your time today.